



Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program

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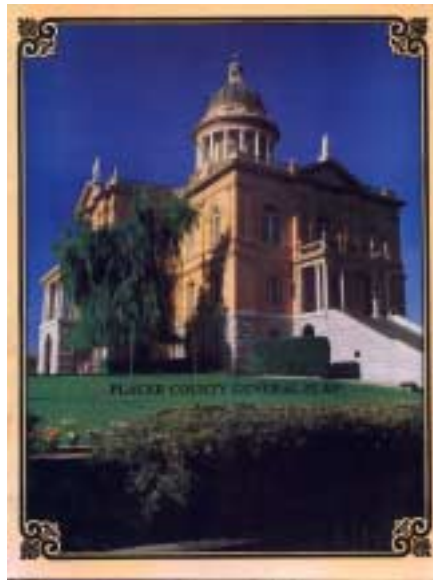
PLACER LEGACY

The *Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program* is a program of the County of Placer to protect and conserve open space and agricultural lands in Placer County. The program has been developed to implement the goals, policies and programs of the 1994 Placer County General Plan. The documents that guide program implementation include this Placer Legacy Summary and a Background Report printed separately.

The Uniqueness of Placer County

Placer County rises from the Sacramento Valley to the spectacular shores of Lake Tahoe. Between the valley and the summit lies a great diversity of natural communities, including one of California's signature landscapes, foothill oak woodlands. This geographic and climatic diversity makes Placer County home to a rich variety of plant and animals species and contributes to the County's reputation as one of the scenic treasures of California.

Over the last 150 years, many of the County's once vast grasslands, woodlands and forests have been converted to urban rural, suburban, industrial, and agricultural uses. These trends are expected to continue for decades to come. Today, Placer County is one of the fastest growing counties in California. Residents and businesses continue to be attracted by the opportunity to live, work and recreate in a place of such remarkable natural beauty. As the population grows, however, Placer County risks losing the natural and scenic qualities



that distinguish it from other developing regions of the state. By adopting a comprehensive open space and agricultural conservation program to implement the goals in the County's and cities' general plans, the community can retain its unique natural heritage, minimize conflicts between conservation and economic development, and enhance the prosperity of current and future residents.

The Placer County General Plan

In 1994, the Board of Supervisors updated the County's General Plan by adopting a new General Plan Policy Document and Land Use Diagram. The Policy Document contains hundreds of policies that are intended to govern land and economic development activities for the unincorporated areas of Placer County. In many respects, the General Plan serves as the County's "constitution" for land use and development. Since 1973, State law has required that general plans contain an open space element (Government Code Section 65560 *et. seq.*) to address how open space resources can be protected and conserved over time. Open space is considered "any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use."

The Placer Legacy Program is not intended to represent the open space and conservation elements of the County's General Plan, which are already contained in the 1994 General Plan Policy Document. Instead, the Program implements the policies within

those elements by seeking to protect open space resources. It is important to note that the Placer Legacy Program does not compete with or alter the County's General Plan or community plan land use diagrams or zoning maps. Rather, the program seeks to ensure that those land uses are maintained over time. Urban and suburban development will continue to be directed into areas already designated for growth. Agricultural (including timber) and open space land will continue to be viewed as land established for natural resource production and open space conservation.

In addition to implementing the General Plan, this program also supplements existing

open space and conservation programs. County and city park departments continue to develop park and recreation facilities for County residents, responding to changes occurring in the County. Placer Legacy complements these existing programs and can improve their effectiveness by providing additional data, coordination, and funding.

The Placer Legacy program also provides important resource information to guide and direct decisions on the preparation of environmental documents for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and for discretionary land use entitlements being examined by County staff and decision-makers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Placer County General Plan – Amendment of the General Plan Land Use Diagram is not part of this program unless requested by a landowner.

Zoning – Amendment of the Placer County Zoning Maps is not part of this program unless requested by a landowner.

New Land Use Regulations – The Placer Legacy Program will be developed within the context of the existing local, state and federal regulatory environment, relying upon existing statutes and General Plan policies for implementation. Furthermore, the Program will remain consistent with local, state and federal regulations as they are amended over time or as new regulations are adopted, independent of the program.

Willing Seller/Willing Buyer – The program is to identify and work with willing sellers/willing buyers. A core interest of the program is to enable the County to make itself a willing buyer to persons wishing to sell interests in lands having value for conservation purposes. No property owner may be coerced or forced to sell any rights to their property, nor may condemnation proceedings be used to implement this program unless requested by the landowner.

Land Use Compatibility – For all acquisitions associated with the Placer Legacy Program, any subsequent change in land use resulting from the acquisition activity shall be compatible with adjoining land uses, as determined by the decision-making body.

Scope of Governmental Interest – In its implementation of program objectives, the Placer Legacy Program will strive to minimize the level of governmental intervention in private land management decisions.



Table 1. Placer Legacy Goals and Objectives

GOAL STATEMENT

Placer County has been blessed with extensive and diverse natural resources: woodlands, forests, grasslands, riparian areas, lakes, rivers and an assortment of open spaces. It is the goal of this project to develop specific, economically viable, implementation programs which will enable the residents of Placer County to preserve a sufficient quantity of these resources to maintain a high quality of life and an abundance of diverse natural habitats while supporting the economic viability of the County and enhancing property values. The project will further the various open space and natural resource goals of the Placer County General Plan and associated General Plans of the six cities in Placer County.

OBJECTIVES

- *Maintain* a viable agricultural segment of the economy;
- *Conserve* natural features necessary for access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities;
- *Retain* important scenic and historic areas;
- *Preserve* the diversity of plant and animal communities;
- *Protect* endangered and other special status plant and animal species;
- *Separate* urban areas into distinct communities; and
- *Ensure* public safety.

KEY ELEMENTS

The *Placer Legacy Program* will:

- Provide a wide variety of ownership, preservation, and funding methods to address the diverse circumstances present in the county;
- Benefit the county's economic future by clearly maintaining the county as an outstanding place to live and do business;
- Maintain local land use control by taking a leadership role in the preservation of endangered species and habitat protection;
- Identify open spaces of importance to residents of the cities as well as the unincorporated area;
- Improve certainty in the regulatory process; and
- Design the program to allow phasing and early opportunities for successful implementation.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

In developing the program, priority will be given to ensuring that:

- The process involves all stakeholders and provides meaningful opportunities for public involvement from both unincorporated and incorporated area residents;
- The final program is scientifically sound, ensures the long-term conservation of important open spaces and natural communities, and includes a financing plan for immediate and ongoing implementation; and
- The effort receives the widespread support of Placer County residents.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

In April 1998, the Board of Supervisors considered and adopted a set of goals and objectives for the program (see Table 1). In addition to General Plan policies, these statements provide the foundation for the Program and provide focus regarding which types of open space are to be evaluated for conservation and for what purpose.

Several existing County and city policies protect natural resources in Placer County, including local zoning, grading and flood damage prevention ordinances, and the Williamson Act and Timberland Preservation Zone programs. While beneficial, these tools do not provide permanent protection for open space and agricultural land. The Placer Legacy Program was developed to provide

permanent mechanisms to protect these resources.

Conservation and Regulatory Goals

The Placer Legacy Program addresses the non-regulatory conservation objectives of the Placer County General Plan and regulatory requirements associated with biological resources (i.e., state and federal endangered species acts and federal wetland regulatory laws). The Program seeks to obtain regulatory compliance through a comprehensive planning and permitting program in the form of a Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) and a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). (See discussion beginning on page 31).

OPEN SPACE ELEMENTS

Open space is not just a land use in its own right, but a value associated with other land uses such as agriculture and outdoor recreation. In the County's General Plan, open space is defined broadly, encompassing several land use categories and public benefits.

The public benefits of open space, in its various forms, may range from recreational use to aesthetic appreciation to food production. These values contribute to the wealth of the County, boosting its economic, social and natural capital, and contributing to the long-term sustainability of the region.

The goal of the Placer Legacy Program is to maintain this great source of wealth by ensuring the future persistence of the County's existing open space resources, grouped into the following Program elements:

1. Agriculture
2. Biological Resources, including general biodiversity and sensitive species
3. Outdoor Recreation
4. Cultural Resources
5. Scenic Resources/Urban Separators
6. Public Safety

These Program elements provide the framework for implementing the open space goals and policies of the County's and cities' general plans.

The Placer Legacy Program addresses the conservation of each of these elements specifically, although the level of effort invested will vary according to identified needs and opportunities.

COUNTY-WIDE TRENDS

Current conditions

Placer County contains approximately 960,000 acres of land and water, ranging from sea level at the valley floor to over 9,000 feet at the crest of the Sierra Nevada. The diversity of this land is represented in no fewer than twenty distinct vegetation associations spanning at least six ecological zones and three major ecoregions (see Map 1).

Urban land uses comprise just over 60,000 acres of Placer County (36,000 acres are intensively developed), with the remaining 900,000 acres representing a wide range of conditions, from remote alpine areas virtually untouched by human activity to highly modified rural residential and agricultural landscapes (see Figure 1). Over half of the County's land area is found on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada.

Map 1. Placer County Vegetation Communities

Source: CDF 1999, CDFG 1996, USFS, Foothill Associates 1999, Placer County

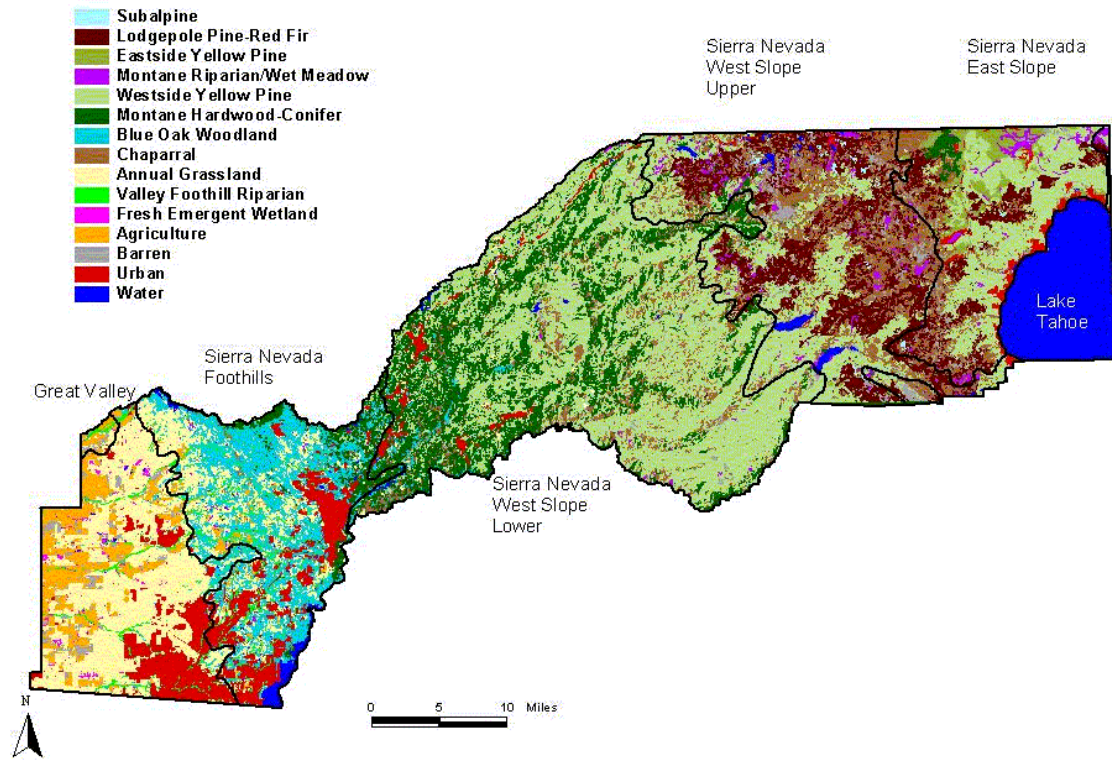
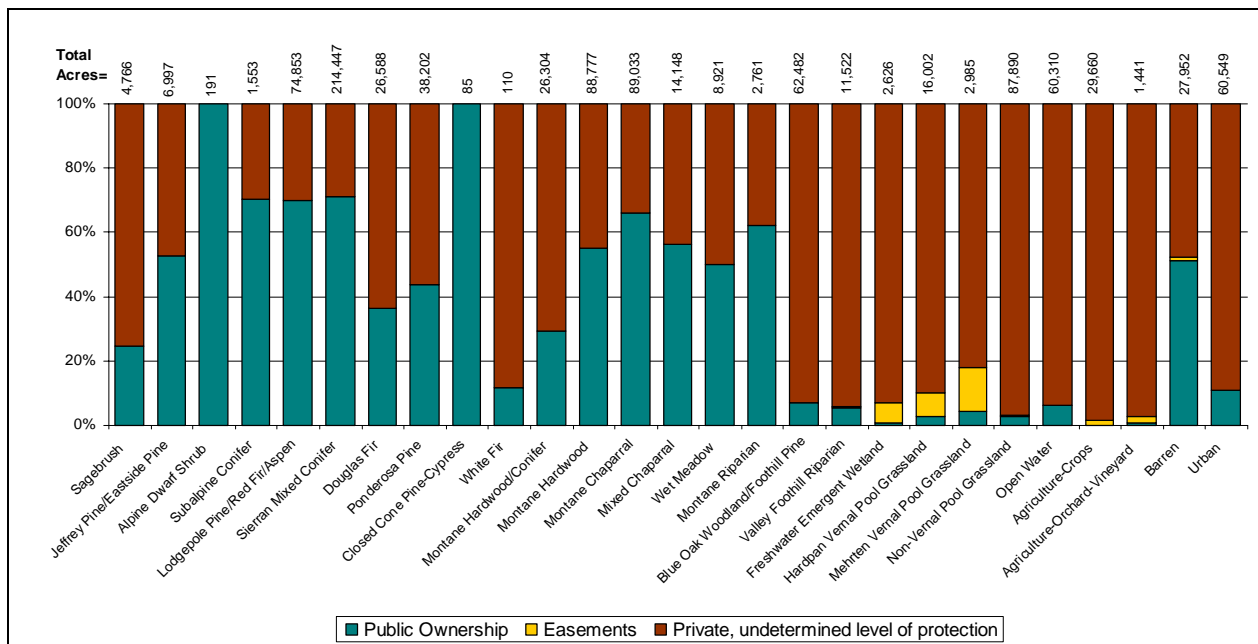


Figure 1. Placer County Landcover and Ownership



The dominant vegetation in the County's three major ecoregions are annual grassland in the Great Valley, oak woodland in the Sierra Nevada Foothills, and conifer forest in the Sierra Nevada proper (see Figure 1). Within these major vegetation types is a diversity of small-patch ecosystems and hydrologically-connected aquatic communities, including riparian woodlands, vernal pools, freshwater emergent wetlands, and montane wet meadows. Aquatic communities, which provide habitat for a large number of species (including many with special protection status), have been greatly reduced and degraded, particularly in the valley and foothill portions of the County. Other natural communities that are relatively rare in Placer County, though widespread elsewhere, include chamise chaparral, primarily in the American River

Canyon, and sagebrush, on the east slope of the Sierra Nevada. Placer County also contains a small amount of alpine shrub and subalpine conifers in its high elevation zones.

The County also contains a diversity of agricultural production, ranging from rice and cattle in the Valley, to orchards and specialty crops in the Foothills, to timber and Christmas trees in the Sierra Nevada (see Map 2). Approximately 60,000 acres in Placer County are intensively cultivated or grazed, with rice and mixed pasture constituting the dominant agricultural land uses, at close to 20,000 acres each (see Figure 2). Large additional areas of land are managed for timber. Fruit orchards, formerly widespread in Western Placer County, currently comprise just over 600 acres (see Figure 2).

Map 2. Western Placer Agriculture

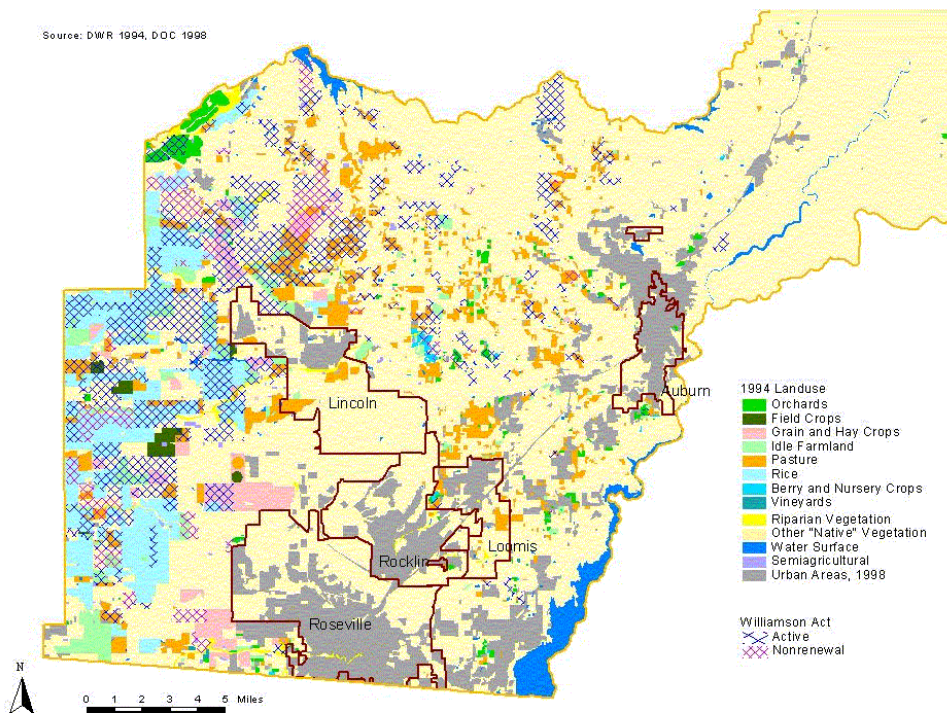
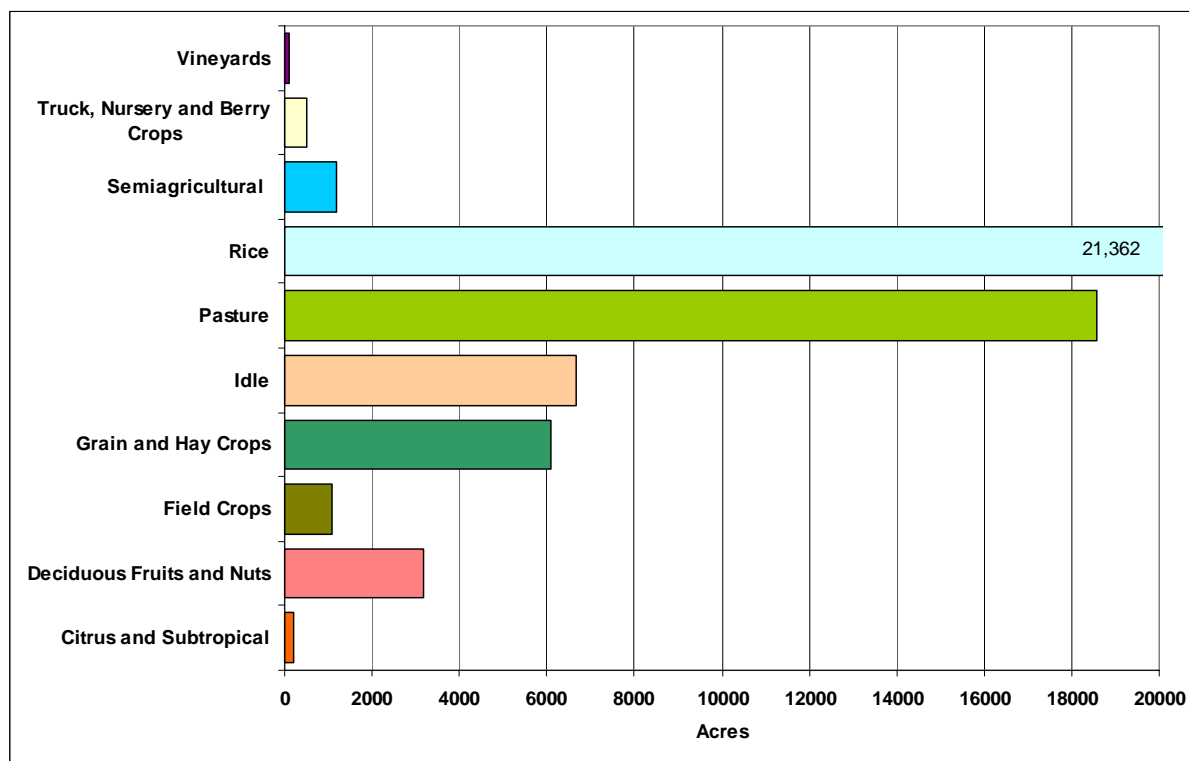


Figure 2. Placer County Agricultural Land Use

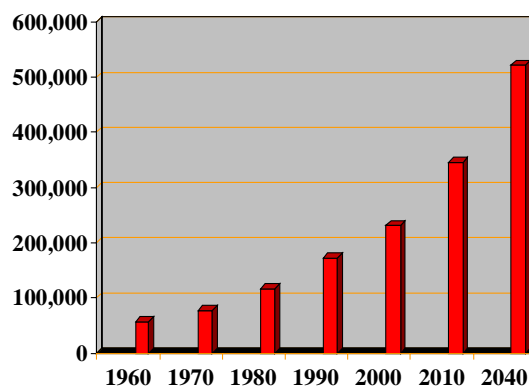


Population and Growth

In 1967, the Board of Supervisors adopted the first General Plan for Placer County. What the early plan lacked in details it made up for in its vision. The Plan dictated that unincorporated areas were to be dominated by agricultural land uses to the west, timberlands to the east, and rural residential land uses throughout the foothills. Urban land uses would primarily be located in existing unincorporated communities. The vision depicted in that General Plan has essentially held true for over 30 years.

Since 1967, Placer County has witnessed significant changes. When the first General Plan was adopted, the entire population of the County was approximately 77,000 people, almost exactly the population of Roseville in 2000.

Figure 3. Population Trends



According to SACOG, the County's 2000 population reached 230,060 people, an increase of 158,000 over the 1967 population. The majority of the residents live in the cities of Placer County but the unincorporated area continues to have the largest population under a single governmental entity.

In 1998, the State Department of Finance (DOF) identified Placer and San Benito

Counties as the two fastest growing counties in the State of California, each with four percent annual growth rates. This high growth is projected to continue for years to come. Based on population and employment projections, Placer County's population will more than double in the next 40 years. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) projects a 2022 population of 407,550 (excluding the Tahoe Basin). Looking further into the future, DOF has projected that in 2040 Placer County's population will be 522,214 (see Figure 3).

The Placer Legacy program seeks to achieve a balance between anticipated growth and conservation of the very resources that attract so many new residents and employees to the area.

Trends

The population doubling expected over the next 40 years translates into a large conversion of existing open space into urban and rural residential developments. The County's and cities' general plans accommodate for this expected growth with approximately 48,000 acres of land designated for new urban land uses (commercial, industrial and residential), bringing the total urban area to 84,000 acres. Map 3 shows that future urban growth will occur within a relatively compact urban area—mostly in South Placer. In addition, up to 34,000 new rural residential units could eventually be built within the 105,000 acres designated for rural residential land uses, quadrupling the current total.

Map 3. Placer County General Plan Buildout (Urban and Rural Residential)

Source: DWR 1994, DDC 1998,
Placer County and City General Plans

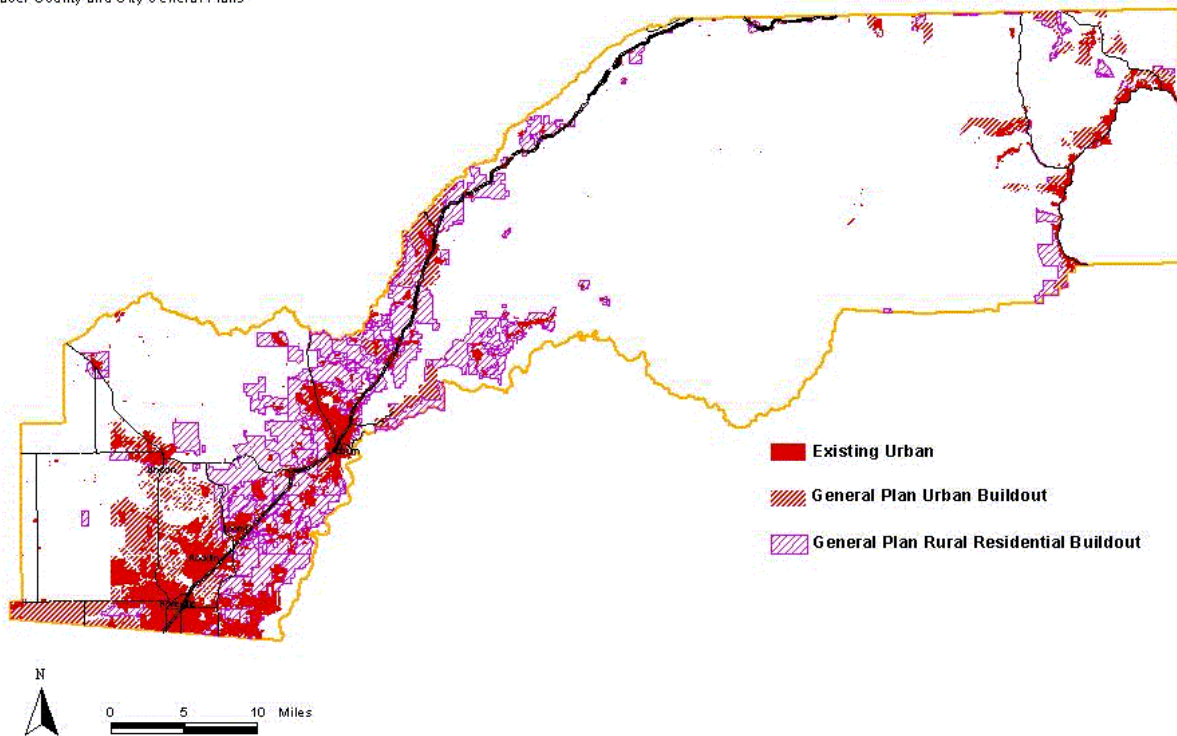
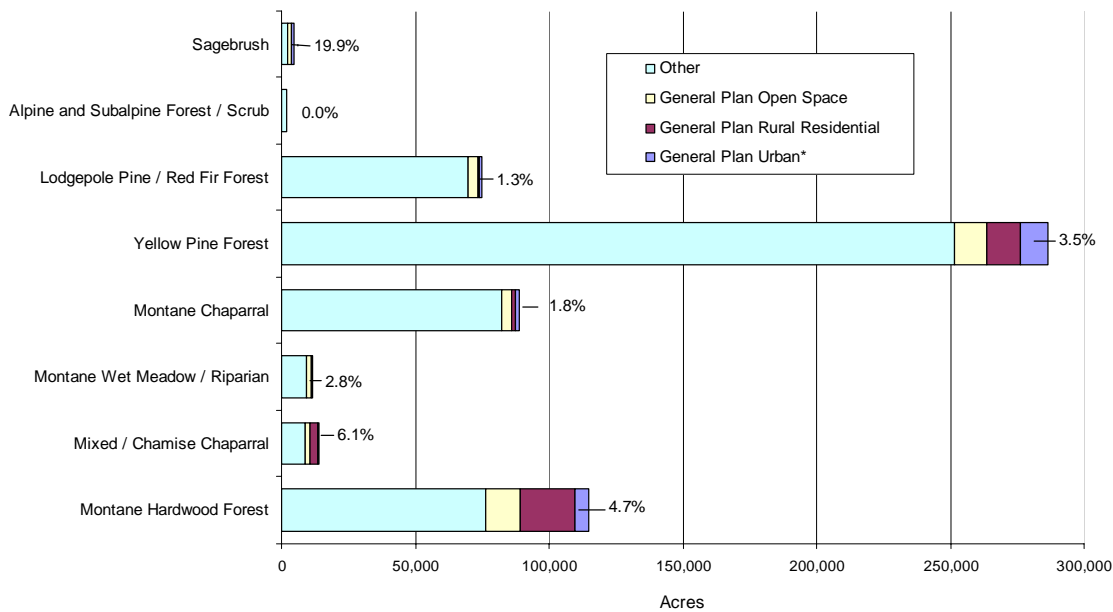
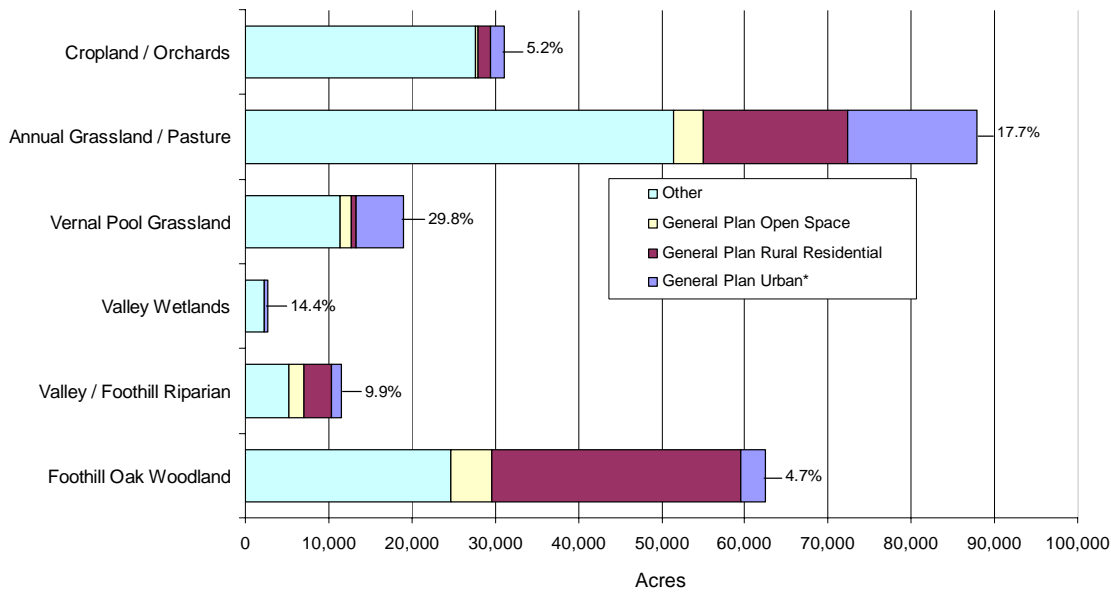


Figure 4. Placer County Vegetation Conversion under General Plan Buildout



SACOG has calculated that the collective general plans in Placer County (cities and County) would accommodate approximately 570,000 persons at buildout (post-2040 for residential). However, the desirability of Placer County as a place to live and work, especially among high wage-earners, has resulted in heavy land speculation in areas outside of those areas designated for new development. Owners of agricultural lands that are not currently zoned for urban

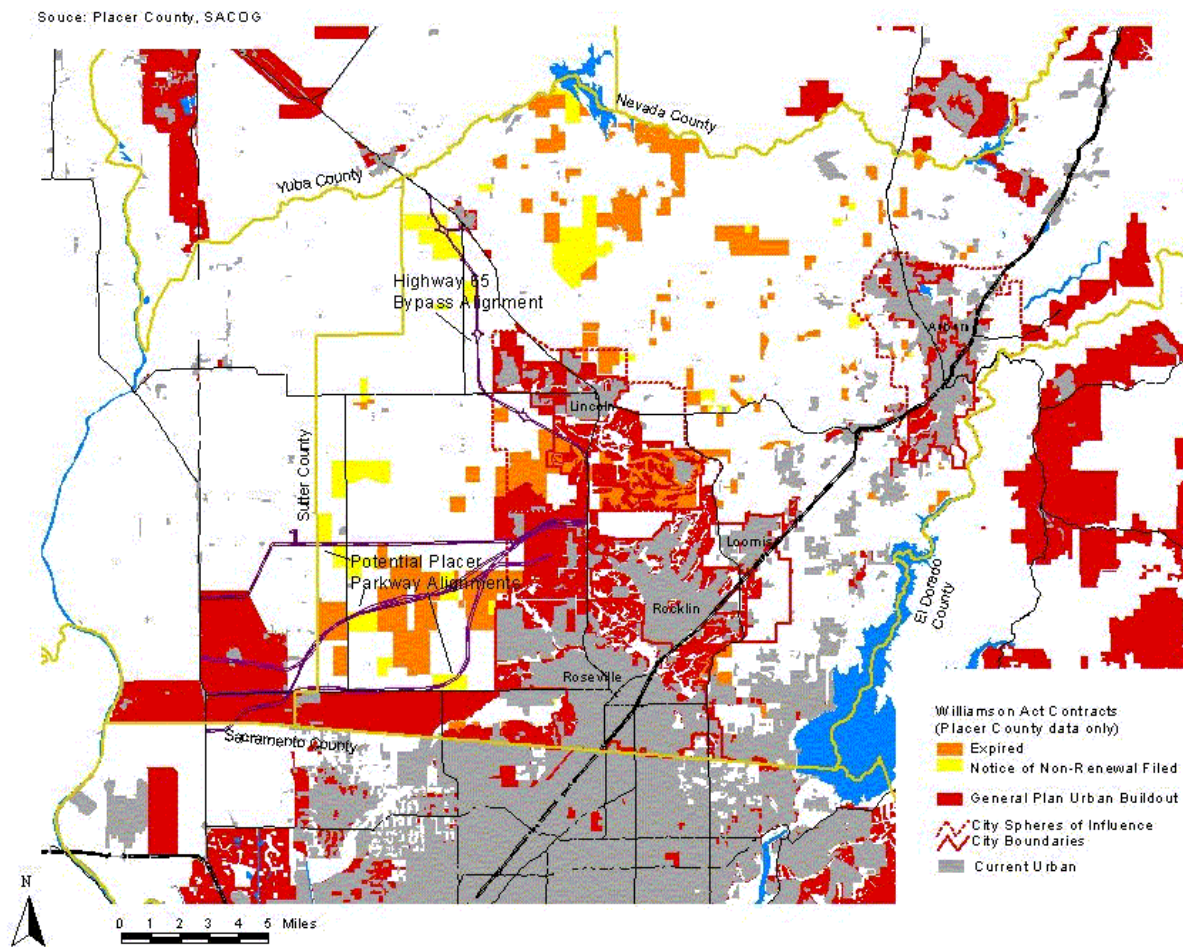
development often anticipate that future County General Plan amendments or city land annexations will enable them to convert existing agricultural land to development. One indicator of this trend is the high percentage of land in western Placer County (close to 50%) currently owned by non-Placer County residents. The area west of Roseville and Lincoln is particularly affected by speculation, fueled in part by proposed major infrastructure improvements (i.e.,

Placer Parkway and the Highway 65 bypass), which serve as potential magnets for new development.

Another indicator of speculation pressure is Placer County's high rate of non-renewed Williamson Act (farmland preservation)

contracts, the second highest in the State behind Orange County. Experience shows that landowners often subdivide these properties for development once the contract has expired.

Map 4. Western Placer Growth Pressures



Ownership Patterns and Current Open Space Protection

Land ownership patterns vary widely throughout the County. A majority of land in the Sierra Nevada is managed by federal land agencies, while valley and foothill regions remain largely in private ownership (see Map 5). In total, almost 400,000 acres of land in Placer County are publicly owned, leaving approximately 500,000 acres of

undeveloped land with varying levels of long-term protection, primarily in the valley and foothill regions.

Most of Placer County's public lands are managed for multiple purposes, including open space. The level of protection provided for open space values on federal and state lands varies according to management regimes, but in general, most of

these areas are planned to remain open and undeveloped.

Biological resource values receive higher levels of protection in the Forest Service's wilderness areas (Granite Chief in Placer County) and roadless areas larger than 5,000 acres, where logging and various other activities are restricted. These areas comprise a combined total of approximately 115,000 acres in Placer County (see Map 5).

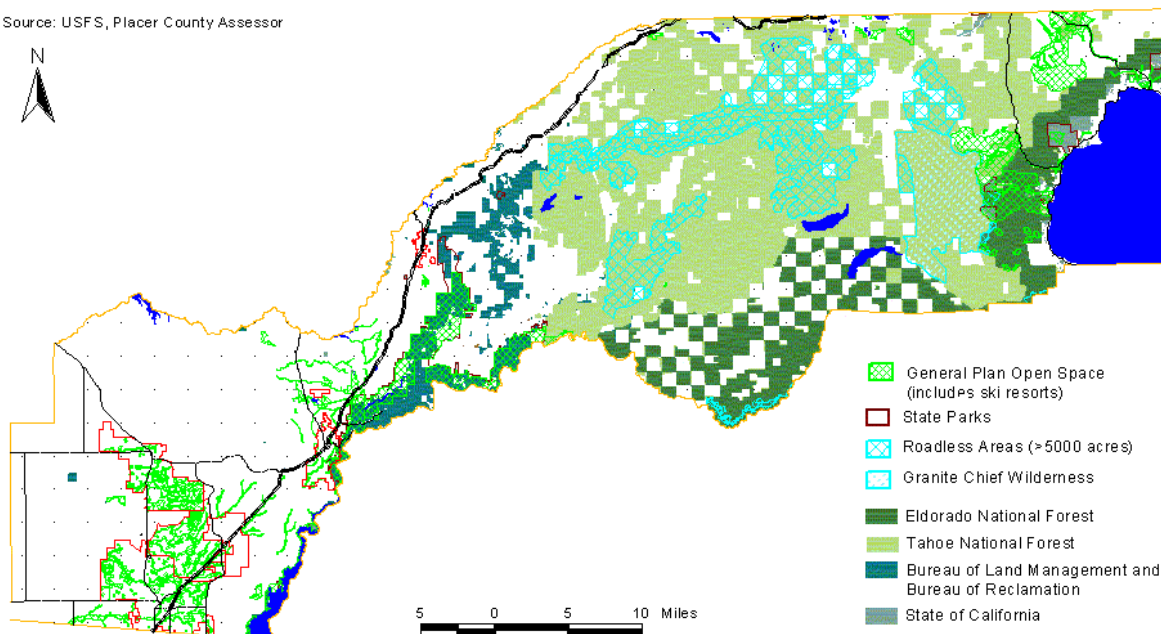
Recreational resources are maintained throughout the Sierra Nevada on Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation lands, as well as several State Park ownerships around Lake Tahoe. The most accessible recreation areas in the County are perhaps the Auburn and Folsom Lake State Recreation Areas, in the American River basin (see Map 5).

In western Placer County, there are few public lands, and permanent protection of open space resources is low. Within the incorporated cities, the concentration of developed park amenities is relatively high (see Map 5). However, the majority of privately-owned open space has no formal protection beyond the regulatory requirements of federal and state endangered species laws, federal wetland protection, and local ordinances and general plan policies.

Thus western Placer natural communities, including vernal pool grasslands, oak woodlands and riparian corridors, are generally less protected than the conifer and montane hardwood communities of the Sierra Nevada. Exceptions to this geographic trend include east slope sagebrush/conifer and wet meadow communities, which are largely in private ownership (see Figure 4).

Map 5. Placer County Public Lands and Protected Open Space

Source: USFS, Placer County Assessor



COUNTY-WIDE OBJECTIVES BY PROGRAM ELEMENT

The Program follows the guidance contained in a Placer County Board of Supervisor's

November 8, 1999 resolution on the scope of Placer Legacy. The following objectives for Placer Legacy Program elements are based on a statement of conditions, objectives and recommendations for action that were developed by the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Scientific Working Group during the summer of 1999. The objectives are derived from an assessment of where the Placer Legacy Program can add substantial value to open space and agricultural conservation above that afforded through the discretionary land use process or by present multi-use management of public lands. The recommended actions (listed by study area in Table 3) will be undertaken by the most appropriate entity, to be determined as the Program is implemented. Usually this will be the County and often the cities, but it may also be other public or private parties or some future management authority.

Agriculture

Placer County has a robust historical and present-day agricultural economy (see Map 2). More than one third of the productive farmland is owner-operated, a relatively high proportion compared with other Central Valley counties. The farming population is aging, however, and for economic reasons, farmland is increasingly sold for land development or speculation rather than kept in agricultural production by younger generations. Urban growth hastens the rate at which Placer County agricultural lands are converted to non-agricultural uses, especially in western Placer, where large parcel sizes and proximity to urban areas in Placer and Sacramento Counties has made the area a prime target for new residential, commercial and employment-generating development.

There is no obvious geographical aspect to agricultural conservation in western Placer

County because most of the soils are suitable for some type of agriculture. Instead, agriculture in Placer County is dependent upon consistently favorable market conditions and on reliable, reasonably priced water of adequate quality and quantity for agricultural purposes.



- ⇒ The Placer Legacy Program will help the farmer by developing a strong local product identity, providing assistance with marketing of locally grown produce, promoting farmers' markets, and educating the public about the special values of locally grown crops.
- ⇒ Working with the County Agricultural Commissioner, the Placer Legacy Program will act as an advocate for the agricultural community. Types of advocacy may include educating the public about the County's right-to-farm ordinance, and working to make water available at a reasonable price.

The establishment of neighborhood agricultural "districts" with specific, locally applicable policies can help preserve the integrity and economic viability of Placer County's agricultural regions. Neighboring agricultural landowners/producers may choose to collaborate on conservation easements and other forms of land preservation.

To preserve the broad range of agricultural activities that occur in Placer County, programs that provide economic and planning assistance to farmers will be developed. Placer Legacy will assist farmers with tax and estate planning, and continue to implement and promote the Williamson Act for long-term agricultural preservation.

- ⇒ The Placer Legacy Program can help make agricultural conservation valuable to the general public by purchasing agricultural easements that also protect other open space resources (e.g., creeks and wetlands, or scenic corridors). The more values that are protected, the greater the value of the easement.



Biological resources

Placer County's elevational gradient translates into high habitat diversity, with no fewer than twenty distinct vegetation associations (Figure 1). Due to the County's linear shape and east-west orientation, the interface with other jurisdictions (five counties and the State of Nevada) is high, and the integrity of most natural communities found within the County depends, in part, upon conditions found outside of the County.

Many natural communities extend into neighboring counties and, particularly in the foothill region, provide important landscape

linkages along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada.

High habitat diversity also results in high species diversity. Given the high rate of change and habitat conversion in the County, many species have experienced large declines since pre-settlement times, and several are threatened with extinction or local extirpation. More than 100 species have been identified as "sensitive," with some type of special status or recognition assigned by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and/or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

The work of the Placer Legacy Scientific Working Group (SWG) has led to a biological conservation strategy (found in the Placer Legacy Background Report), which addresses the County's biological resources in more detail and outlines the research that will be needed to implement the biological objectives of the Placer Legacy Program. This plan lays the groundwork for the development of a County-wide HCP/NCCP.

The general goals identified by this strategy are (1) to conserve representative natural habitats within the Great Valley, Foothill, and Sierra Nevada ecoregions, (2) to identify and conserve smaller sensitive communities at the scales at which they occur, (3) to maintain or restore key ecosystem processes, and (4) whenever, possible, to reduce threats to biodiversity (e.g., unnecessary habitat conversion, fragmentation, or degradation; disruption of ecosystem processes; invasive exotic species).



Creeks and Riparian Zones

Western Placer aquatic and riparian habitat, which has been dramatically reduced in extent and quality from historic conditions, has been identified as an important conservation target for Placer Legacy. In Placer County, stream environments represent some of the greatest remaining biodiversity in the County, yet are not consistently protected by existing regulation.

Two primary strategies have been identified with respect to aquatic and riparian conservation.

- ⇒ First, Placer Legacy will work with landowners to conserve and enhance degraded stream segments through streambed improvement, re-vegetation, and, where appropriate, widening the vegetated zone within the natural floodplain and increasing the retention of surface water runoff.
- ⇒ Secondly, Placer Legacy can play an important role in protecting existing high quality riparian resources and preventing further degradation from urban encroachment, particularly in rural residential and suburban areas.

Vernal Pools

Vernal pools, while subject to strict mitigation requirements under federal and

state endangered species and wetlands laws, have been greatly reduced, and face further fragmentation and isolation as a result of urban growth in western Placer County. Vernal pool conservation is particularly important from a regional perspective, as a large percent of the region's vernal pools are found in Placer County.

- ⇒ The Placer Legacy Program will work to preserve large core areas of vernal pools with relatively undisturbed topography and hydrology. In addition, the preservation of small, undisturbed pool complexes at the edge of watersheds, particularly on the rare Mehrten volcanic mudflow formation, will help maintain biological diversity among pools.



Oak Woodlands

Foothill oak woodlands have little regulatory protection and may present the single greatest opportunity for Placer County to preserve large blocks of wildlife habitat in private ownership.

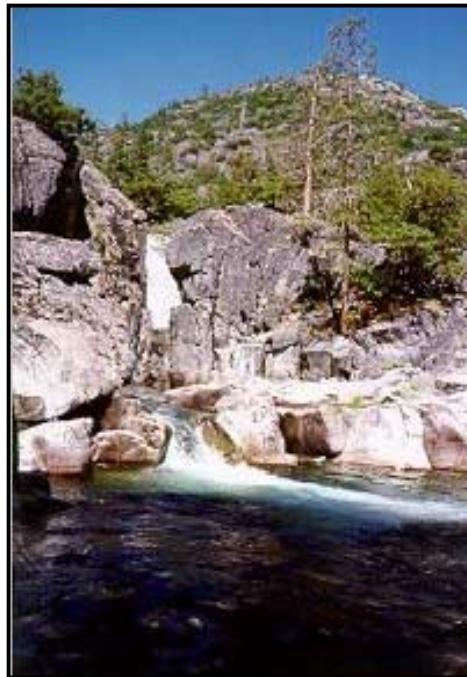
- ⇒ The Placer Legacy Program will work to protect large areas of oak woodlands and associated communities of unusual biological diversity, age structure, understory component, landscape linkage, or scenic value.

- ⇒ In rural residential areas, it may not be practical to undertake widespread conservation by acquisition due to the fragmented nature of the landscape. Instead, Placer Legacy will work to protect these oak woodlands through landowner education, local conservation activities, and continued implementation of County ordinances and policies on discretionary land use entitlements.

Grasslands

Although the majority of grasslands in Placer County are grazing lands dominated by non-native annual grasses, they still retain significant biological value, particularly for raptors, other birds, and small mammals.

- ⇒ Placer Legacy will protect grasslands as important components of vernal pool and oak woodland conservation areas. Grassland areas of unusual biological diversity, native species presence, restoration potential, or scenic/urban separator value are appropriate for specific protection in their own right.



wildlife value of public and private forest lands.

- ⇒ The County will work to identify areas in the Sierra Nevada suitable for local government or non-governmental protection, and opportunities for Placer Legacy to participate in land exchanges, management agreements or similar programs to facilitate these efforts. Small areas with high biological value

that are deemed particularly sensitive or contain important sensitive species habitat, such as montane wet meadows and riparian zones, are potential candidates for direct Placer Legacy protection. Larger areas with the potential to improve the connectivity of wildlife habitat at the landscape scale, are more appropriate for federal land agency acquisition and/or management, with the potential assistance of

the Placer Legacy Program.

Sierra Nevada

- ⇒ For Sierra Nevada ecosystems, the Placer Legacy Program can use its comprehensive, County-wide scope and scientific and technical resources to become an active participant in public land planning, and to coordinate with other Sierra-wide planning efforts. The Program will also help develop and coordinate policies that enhance the

Monitoring

To be effective in the long-term, the Program will incorporate a means to monitor trends in the county, evaluate the success of resource protection and management actions, and respond with appropriate changes in management ("adaptive management"). A large part of the monitoring program will be incorporated into a County-wide HCP/NCCP.



Recreational resources

Placer County has a large amount of public recreation for its population size. Principal recreational opportunities are those afforded by public lands in the Sierra Nevada and by the relatively high concentration of developed park amenities available in the cities. However, with the exception of the American River Canyon area, recreational amenities in the lower Sierra and Foothill area are limited, creating a geographic gap in recreation opportunities.

Currently lacking is low intensity or passive recreation (e.g., hiking, biking, equestrian) with appropriate support facilities (e.g., access, parking, picnic grounds, rest rooms, and interpretive materials), oriented toward natural open space resources and a broad range of users, including residents, school children, and visitors.

- ⇒ The Placer Legacy Program will enhance recreational opportunities in the County by improving public trail access, including the construction of staging areas and parking lots, as well as the purchase of public access easements on private land to provide connections to public land and city trail networks.
- ⇒ The Placer Legacy Program will also provide regional recreational facilities in the foothill region, supplementing the

recreation opportunities provided on public lands to the east, and municipal park facilities in urbanized areas. South Placer residents would be served by one or more large regional parks (300 acres or greater) in a rural setting with a variety of passive recreation opportunities. Such a park may be connected with larger areas of protected land, providing additional wildlife habitat value.

- ⇒ Throughout Placer County, across private and public lands, the Placer Legacy Program will work to strategically improve and provide access to an interconnected, regional system of trails and parks.

Cultural resources

Placer County has an abundance of historical resources, particularly around its trans-Sierra and gold rush era history. Although some structures and sites are listed on state and federal historic registries, a great many still lack interpretation, formal status, management or public protection.

Although cultural and historic resources have some degree of protection through state laws, they continue to be lost to construction and land management activities, fire, and lack of maintenance.



- ⇒ The Placer Legacy Program can provide opportunities to protect and conserve

historical resources by providing funding to identify, evaluate, acquire (where appropriate) and maintain historical and cultural resources (including Native American archeological resources and paleontological resources). The identification and evaluation of resources will be done in conjunction with the Placer County Museum, other agencies overseeing cultural resources, and private historic preservation organizations.

- ⇒ In most cases, historical and cultural resources will be protected concurrently with other open space resources, as a secondary objective. However, there may be circumstances in which an acquisition solely for the purpose of protecting a unique cultural/historical resource may be appropriate, particularly when that resource is immediately threatened.

Scenic Resources/Urban Separators

With its diversity of setting, ranging from the Great Valley to the High Sierra, Placer County possesses tremendous scenic resources. Scenic transportation corridors, in particular, contribute to the public perception of open space that motivates many people to move to Placer County. As the County continues to grow, unique and irreplaceable scenic resources are often lost or negatively affected by land management activities, including new construction, vegetative removal and grading activities.

- ⇒ An important contribution of the Placer Legacy Program will be to identify and

formally designate and adopt a system of scenic routes, as called for in the County General Plan. Preparing and completing this program will establish a contemporary perspective on the importance of scenic corridors.

- ⇒ Placer Legacy will also continue to identify and inventory those particularly significant scenic locations and vistas that are not within transportation corridors. Such areas may be protected concurrently with other open space resources, as a secondary objective. However, there may

be circumstances in which an acquisition solely for the purpose of protecting a unique scenic resource may be appropriate, particularly when that resource is immediately threatened.

Another important type of scenic resource, particularly for urban dwellers, is the open space that separates urban centers and promotes community identity. The County and the cities have

an interest in reinforcing clear edges between communities and between cities and the surrounding rural and agricultural landscape to avoid land use conflicts. Currently, there are no mechanisms to ensure that such edges and transition areas will exist over time.

South Placer cities' adopted general plans have already established land use patterns that do not provide for separate distinct urban communities, particularly between Roseville and Rocklin. However, opportunities may exist to create urban greenbelts and work



with developers of new projects to protect open space buffer areas.



- ⇒ Placer Legacy will identify and permanently protect open space areas that define community edges and create transition areas between urban and agricultural land uses, particularly when other open space values are present, e.g., stream corridors, scenic roadways, and sensitive species habitat. Placer Legacy will work with cities to define these transition/buffer areas. Placer Legacy can also take advantage of strategic opportunities to establish greenbelts between existing and proposed urban areas. Placer Legacy will identify the kinds of land uses and urban designs that would be appropriate in these areas.

Public safety

Land-based public safety hazards in Placer County include flood, fire, and avalanche zones. Flood hazards are primarily associated with the flatter western County; fire hazards occur throughout the steep slopes

and high fuel loads of the foothills and lower Sierra; and avalanche dangers exist in certain steep high snowfall areas in the Sierra Nevada.

In general, existing local, state, and federal laws are sufficient to identify and protect public safety. Placer Legacy will consider public safety constraints as one of many multiple objectives for conservation.

- ⇒ Placer Legacy will continue to catalog lands with public safety constraints and use this information when screening and ranking lands for biological or other resource acquisition. In some areas of particular fire, flood, or avalanche risk, Placer Legacy may acquire residential parcels on which development would pose an undue risk to the public and a burden on public safety services. In the Sierra Nevada, these parcels may also have biological or scenic values.
- ⇒ Placer Legacy may also coordinate with other local and regional programs to protect public safety.



PRIORITIZATION OF RESOURCE TYPES

For each open space element, the Placer Legacy Program has identified several resource types, which represent the potential targets of the specific conservation measures contained herein. To maximize the benefits of the Program, given funding and time constraints, open space resource types have been assigned preliminary implementation priorities (see Table 1).

The following objective criteria have been developed to guide this prioritization process:

1. **Trend** – Is the resource increasing, remaining stable, decreasing or decreasing rapidly?
2. **Private ownership** – How much of the resource is found on privately-owned lands not currently protected as open space?
3. **Rarity** – How common is the resource within Placer County?
4. **Protection through other programs** – What level of protection is already provided to the resource by local, state and federal programs?
5. **Number of sensitive species** – Does the resource support many sensitive species?
6. **Multiple objectives** – To what extent does conservation of the resource in question also contribute to the conservation of other open space resources?

Scores ranging from 1 to 4 were assigned to each resource for each criterion, and an average was obtained for each resource objective. Applicable study areas (as defined on page 23) are also listed.

Table 1. Prioritization of Resource Types

Open Space Resource Types	Priority (4 max)	Applicable Study Areas
Agriculture		
Valley intensive agriculture (rice, row crops, orchards)	3.2	AV, SP, SG
Foothill intensive agriculture (orchards, specialty crops)	2.7	LB, SG, AB
Valley rangelands	3.3	AV, SP, SG
Foothill rangelands	2.8	LB, SG, AB
Western Sierra timber operations	2.2	FH, LS, WS
Biological		
Hardpan vernal pool grasslands	3.5	AV, SP, SG
Mehrten vernal pool grasslands	3.5	SP, LB, SG
Valley grasslands (non vernal pool)	3.2	AV, SP, SG
Valley riparian/aquatic	3.3	AV, SP, SG
Valley wetlands	3.3	AV, SP, SG
Foothill riparian/aquatic	3.2	LB, SG, AB
Blue oak woodland / savannah	3.2	LB, SG, AB
Interior/canyon live oak	2.7	SG, AB, AR, FH, LS, WS
Chamise chaparral	2.7	AR
Black oak	3.2	SG, AB, AR, FH, LS, WS
Major rivers (Bear, American, Rubicon, Truckee)	2.3	LB, SG, AB, AR, LS, WS, ES
West slope conifers	2.5	AR, FH, LS, WS
Sagebrush / east slope conifers	3.5	ES
Montane riparian/aquatic	2.8	FH, LS, WS, ES
Montane wet meadows	3.0	ES, WS
Lake Tahoe	2.5	ES
Outdoor Recreation		
Environmental education	2.8	all
Passive recreation in valley/foothill region (hiking, biking, horseback riding)	3.6	AV, SP, LB, SG, AB
Back-country passive recreation	2.4	AR, FH, LS, WS, ES
River and lake recreation (boating, rafting, swimming)	2.0	LB, SG, AB, AR, LS, WS, ES
Cultural Resources		
Historic landmarks, buildings and roads	3.4	all
Native American artifacts, petroglyphs and paleontological sites	3.0	all
Scenic Resources / Urban Separators		
Scenic transportation corridors	3.2	all
Scenic vista points	3.4	all
Community separators / greenbelts	4.0	AV, SP, LB, AB, ES
Buffers between agricultural and urban activities	3.8	AV, SP, LB, AB
Public Safety		
Floodplains	2.4	AV, SP, LB, SG
High fire hazard areas	2.4	LB, SG, AB, AR, LS, WS, ES
Avalanche zones	1.4	WS, ES

As indicated in Table 1, average scores greater than 3 were obtained for the following resources: valley intensive agriculture, valley rangelands, hardpan and Mehrten vernal pools, valley grasslands, valley riparian/aquatic, valley wetlands, Blue Oak woodland/savanna, Black Oak, sagebrush/east slope conifers, montane wet meadows, passive recreation in the valley/foothill area, scenic transportation corridors, scenic vista points, community separators/greenbelts and buffers between urban and agricultural activities. The highest overall scores were given to scenic and urban separator resource objectives, primarily due to the high threat levels that they face, as well as their unique attributes.

The scores obtained from this prioritization exercise will help guide initial implementation of Placer Legacy by focusing acquisition and program development efforts. However, priorities will continue to evolve as the Program progresses and the landscape

changes. Funding sources and levels will ultimately help determine the scope and level of effort to be undertaken by Placer Legacy. Furthermore, as many opportunities may have yet to present themselves, program implementation will necessarily be flexible, with a built-in ability to respond to new situations.

Taking into account the condition of existing resources, identified objectives, and geographic opportunities, the Placer Legacy Program has identified a range of potential land area management efforts, presented in Table 2. Specific estimates and methodology are described in the Placer Legacy Background Report.

These preliminary targets represent order-of-magnitude conservation goals, rather than upper or lower limits on acquisition. Inasmuch as the success of the Placer Legacy Program is ultimately determined by its level of funding, the acquisition targets represent hypothetical distributions of land management under various funding scenarios.

Table 2. Possible Scenarios for Land Management

	Extent of Land Management (acres)		
	Low Involvement	Moderate Involvement	High Involvement
Agriculture	500	13,000	40,000
Biological Resources	5,800	23,100	34,300
Outdoor Recreation	2,600	15,800	19,700
Cultural Resources	0	25	55
Scenic Resources/ Urban Separators	0	7,600	29,200
Public Safety	0	1,700	1,700
Total area managed, taking likely overlap into consideration	8,000	30,000	75,000

Source: Placer County Planning Department, Thomas Reid Associates

TOOLS FOR PROTECTING OPEN SPACE

Land Acquisition and Conservation Easements

Most of the resources under consideration are land-based. Thus Placer Legacy stewardship of open space resources will entail:

1. Establishing a public interest in land supporting open space resources;
2. Defining the public objectives for that land;
3. Operating on the land to fulfill those objectives; and
4. Monitoring the resources on the land to demonstrate that the objectives are being met and to guide the ongoing management effort.

The most direct way to establish a public interest in land is through fee title acquisition. Any land acquisition under the Program will be conducted on a willing seller basis. Therefore, in developing an implementation strategy, Placer Legacy is looking for mutually beneficial land management opportunities to attract willing sellers.

An alternative to acquisition is the purchase of conservation easements. In its simplest form, a conservation easement removes the right to subdivide or develop land by conveying it to a non-profit land trust or government entity in perpetuity. In exchange, the landowner receives significant tax breaks or financial incentives. Similar rights can be obtained less permanently through a lease or contract with the landowner to conduct certain practices that maintain the land's open space resources.

For resource types with a high degree of geographic specificity (primarily biological), the prioritization of potential areas for fee title or easement acquisition will involve

objective, geographic analysis and ranking of resource values, combined with opportunistic evaluation of lands offered by willing sellers. Initially, acquisition efforts will focus on high priority resource types (see Table 1). Lower priority resource types will be conserved on a case-by-case basis, as opportunities arise, and may be protected as secondary conservation objectives in land acquisitions for other purposes.

Figure 5 outlines a decision-making framework for land acquisition, indicating the key decision-making points, as well as staff-level activities for prioritizing and pursuing land acquisitions.

For each of the high priority resource types, two additional factors will determine how land acquisition is approached: the scale(s) of the required conservation effort (site, watershed, landscape or regional) and the type(s) of conservation action required (preservation, enhancement or creation of new resources).

Outreach programs, stewardship incentives and agency coordination

In many cases, Placer Legacy objectives will be more effectively fulfilled by actions that are program- rather than acquisition-based. When the scope of an objective is geographically broad (e.g., agricultural conservation), or involves many small parcels of land (e.g., oak woodland conservation), programs that help landowners preserve and manage resources can have a greater cumulative impact than selected acquisitions. Examples include marketing programs for agricultural products, assistance with tax/estate planning, and education and incentives to promote private stewardship of biological resources.

In areas with high levels of existing public land management (i.e., the Sierra Nevada), or

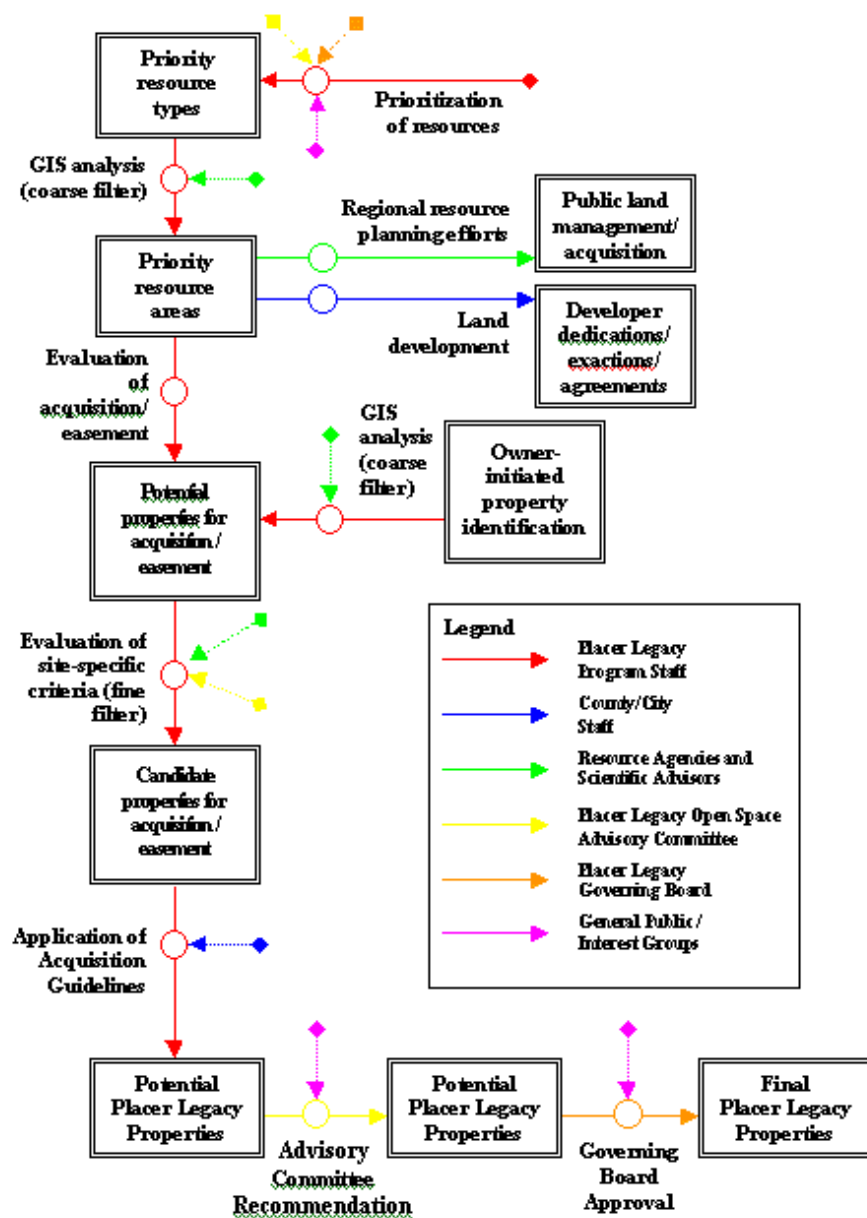
in circumstances where other entities are better equipped to manage a particular resource, the Placer Legacy Program can increase the public benefit by facilitating land acquisitions, promoting interagency cooperation and providing valuable data and analyses to other planning efforts.

The Placer Legacy Program may also contribute to land use planning at the local

government level. Examples include the identification of scenic resources and lands with public safety constraints, as well as the evaluation of proposed projects.

These options are discussed in further detail for each study area in the Placer Legacy Background Report.

Figure 5. Diagram of Placer Legacy Property Acquisition Procedure

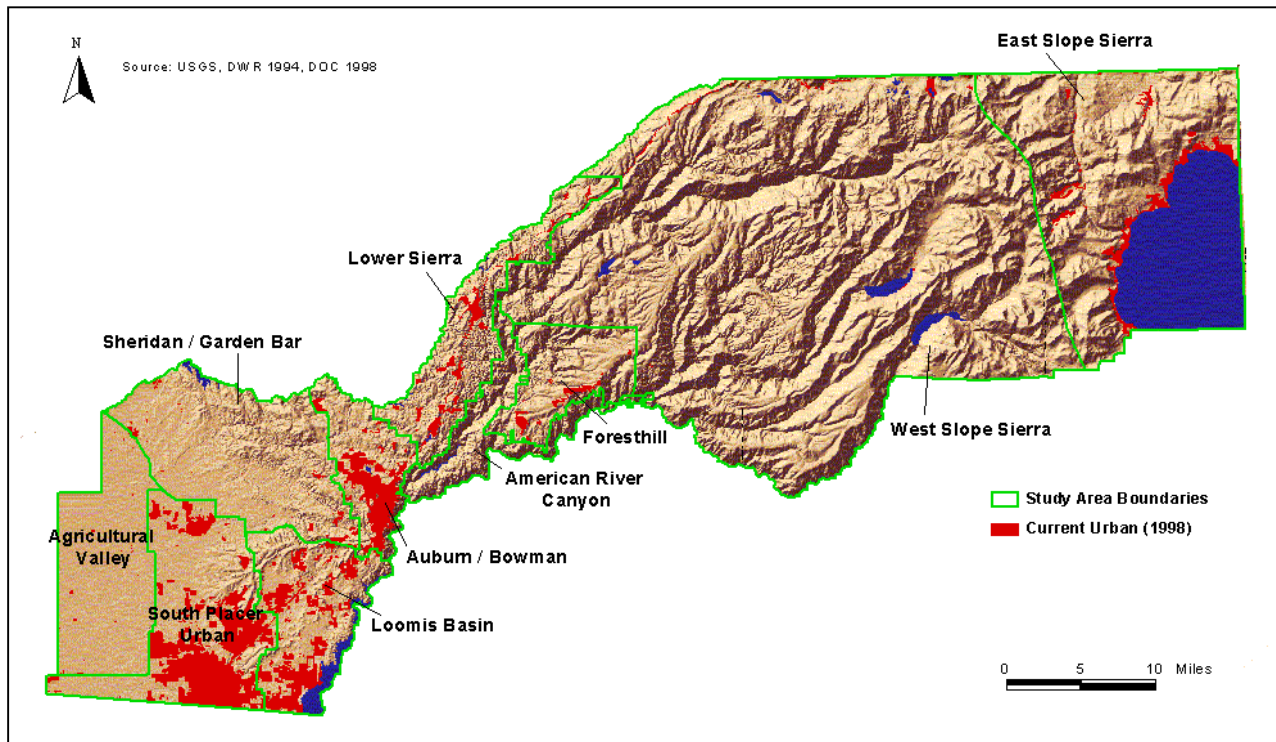


IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES BY STUDY AREA

For implementation purposes, the County was divided into the following ten study areas (see Map 6) based on common geographic and political boundaries:

Agricultural Valley (AV)
South Placer Urban (SP)

Loomis Basin (LB)
Sheridan/Garden Bar (SG)
Auburn/Bowman (AB)
American River Canyon (AR)
Foresthill (FH)
Lower Sierra (LS)
West Slope Sierra (WS)
East Slope Sierra (ES)



Map 6. Study Area Boundaries

For each study area, County-wide conservation objectives were translated into specific local implementation measures. The development of these implementation measures was based on an assessment of each area's existing open space resources, development trends, stressors and conflicts, and opportunities for Placer Legacy Program involvement.

Due to the Program's willing seller requirement and dependence on funding

availability, many of the recommendations may be implemented as opportunities arise, rather than according to this predetermined set of priorities. Furthermore, because many program objectives transcend sociopolitical boundaries, implementation measures will often apply to more than one study area.

Table 3 lists proposed implementation measures by study area.

Table 3. Placer Legacy Implementation Measures by Study Area

Agricultural Valley

- AV-1. Maintain commercially viable agriculture over a large area by promoting the Williamson Act and encouraging the donation of conservation easements, where appropriate.
- AV-2. Work with local farm organizations to identify districts or regions where agricultural conservation opportunities can be identified and coordinated.
- AV-3. Convene a water forum with PCWA, NID and South Sutter Irrigation District to determine how water can be made reliably available for agriculture, as well as habitat conservation and restoration.
- AV-4. Provide resources to assist farmers and ranchers with tax, estate and easement planning.
- AV-5. Support the County's Right-To-Farm Ordinance provisions.
- AV-6. Prioritize the acquisition, through purchase of fee title and/or conservation easements, of agricultural property that contains multiple open space resource values.
- AV-7. Establish a core vernal preserve area by protecting, through a combination of fee title acquisition and conservation easements, several large, biologically diverse vernal pool wetland complexes across the landscape including Mehrten pools if available.
- AV-8. Preserve small, species-rich vernal pool complexes and surrounding uplands, through a combination of fee title acquisition and conservation easements.
- AV-9. Establish a vernal pool-oriented nature center and interpretive trails.
- AV-10. Preserve high quality riparian habitat along Auburn Ravine, Coon Creek, Orchard Creek and Pleasant Grove Creek, through a combination of fee title acquisition and conservation easements.
- AV-11. Purchase, for enhancement purposes, riparian zones in areas with diminished habitat integrity.
- AV-12. Provide financial incentives for property owners to expand and/or re-vegetate riparian zones and improve connectivity along lower stream reaches. (Coordinate with AR/CC

CRMP.)

- AV-13. Work with property owners to remove or modify barriers to anadromous fish passage along Auburn Ravine and Coon Creek.
- AV-14. Encourage the use of rice decomposition water to improve waterfowl and shorebird habitat.
- AV-15. Preserve, through fee title acquisition and/or conservation easements, large upland grassland areas that also provide specific scenic, recreational or biological values.
- AV-16. Purchase easements that provide for the restoration of large areas of fresh emergent wetlands as new waterfowl habitat.
- AV-17. Work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to support new Placer County participants in the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP).
- AV-18. Create a large regional park near the south Placer Urban area consistent with adjacent agricultural uses (not necessarily in this study area).
- AV-19. Allocate discretionary funding for the preservation of historical and cultural resources.
- AV-20. Identify a location for a regional center recognizing the agriculture, history and traditions of Placer County (not necessarily in this study area).
- AV-21. Provide certainty to farmers and ranchers concerning the future extent of urban encroachment by coordinating with cities to create permanent greenbelts around urban areas.
- AV-22. Establish permanent transition areas and buffers between urban/suburban areas and agricultural areas through conservation easements and/or fee title acquisition of lands containing multiple resource values.
- AV-23. Provide incentives for property owners to enhance floodplains by increasing retention/detention capacity and allowing streams to reclaim their natural course.

South Placer Urban

- SP-1. Work with farmers and ranchers to protect agricultural lands outside of designated development areas through the use of conservation easements.
- SP-2. Provide certainty to farmers and ranchers concerning the future extent of urban

	area).		is available for agriculture as well as for habitat conservation and restoration. One option is to initiate a water forum discussion with the area's stakeholders.
LB-10.	Create regional trail connections and develop new regional trails, consistent with adjacent agricultural and residential uses.	SG-4.	Provide resources to assist farmers and ranchers with tax, estate and easement planning.
LB-11.	Improve trail connections between Folsom Lake and Dry Creek and its major tributaries.	SG-5.	Prioritize the acquisition of agricultural property that contains multiple conservation values.
LB-12.	Work with the State Parks and Recreation Department to create new non-motorized recreation opportunities around Folsom Lake.	SG-6.	Preserve, through a combination of conservation easements and fee title acquisition, large areas of blue oak and interior live oak woodland in the upper Bear River and/or Coon Creek watersheds.
LB-13.	Create nature centers and interpretive trails to educate the public about creeks, oak woodlands and grasslands.	SG-7.	Protect extensive areas of grazing lands through conservation easements.
LB-14.	Provide discretionary funds to protect historical and cultural resources.	SG-8.	Enhance fragmented and degraded oak woodlands and riparian zones through property owner incentives and education.
LB-15.	Identify a location for a regional center recognizing and celebrating the agriculture, history and traditions of Placer County.	SG-9.	Acquire and manage vernal pool grasslands in large complexes near Sheridan.
LB-16.	Work with community organizations to identify and protect key parcels along the Lincoln Highway.	SG-10.	Encourage the use of rice decomposition water to improve waterfowl habitat.
LB-17.	Identify and protect important historic orchards and Penryn palm trees.	SG-11.	Preserve high quality riparian habitat, through conservation easements and fee title acquisition, along Coon Creek and the Bear River.
LB-18.	Identify strategic opportunities to create green areas between urban, rural residential and agricultural uses.	SG-12.	Work with property owners to enhance stream channels and remove or modify barriers to anadromous fish passage along Auburn Ravine and Coon Creek. Coordinate efforts with the Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek CRMP organization.
LB-19.	Work with the County, cities and proposed new development along urban edges to create permanent buffers or separators between incompatible uses.	SG-13.	Purchase conservation easements to improve the connectivity and quality of stream zone vegetation on lower Coon Creek. Coordinate efforts with the Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek CRMP organization.
LB-20.	Protect scenic vistas and ridgelines in the lower foothills.	SG-14.	Provide discretionary funds to protect historical and cultural resources.
LB-21.	Identify and protect scenic corridors including Auburn-Folsom Road, Sierra College Blvd., Indian Hill Road, and Interstate 80.	SG-15.	Identify a location for a regional center recognizing and celebrating the agriculture, history and traditions of Placer County.
LB-22.	Encourage property owners to reduce the potential for large wildland fires in grasslands and oak woodlands by establishing buffers and managing fuel loads.	SG-16.	Work with the City of Lincoln to create permanent buffers or separators between incompatible agricultural and urban land uses.
LB-23.	Work with property owners to enhance flood plains by increasing retention capacity and allowing streams to reclaim their natural course.	SG-17.	Identify and protect vistas in the lower foothills north of Lincoln and east of Rocklin.
Sheridan/Garden Bar		SG-18.	Identify and protect vistas of the Sutter Buttes, valley floor and coastal range.
SG-1.	Work with farmers and ranchers to protect agricultural lands outside of designated development areas through the use of conservation easements and by promoting the Williamson Act.	SG-19.	Create nature centers and interpretive trails to educate the public about agricultural
SG-2.	Promote sales of locally grown produce and help create additional markets for agriculture.		
SG-3.	Coordinate with PCWA, NID, and South Sutter Irrigation District to ensure that water		

	operations, oak woodlands, vernal pools, creeks and grasslands.	AB-11.	Work with willing sellers and the Auburn Recreation District to establish trailheads, create regional trail connections, and build new regional trails.
SG-20.	Work with landowners to ensure that private recreation facilities (e.g., hunting clubs and public equestrian facilities) continue to be a viable land use.	AB-12.	Provide discretionary funds to protect historical and cultural resources in the Auburn area.
SG-21.	Work with property owners to enhance floodplains by increasing retention capacity and allowing streams to reclaim their natural courses.	AB-13.	Identify important vista points and scenic corridors including Indian Hill Road, Baltimore Ravine, Bowman views of the Sierra Nevada, the American River corridor, Bell Road, I-80, and local views of historic architecture. If necessary, protect these areas through acquisition or easements.
Auburn/Bowman		AB-14.	Work with the City of Auburn to select strategic opportunities to create greenbelts around urban areas (e.g., Baltimore Ravine).
AB-1.	Promote sales of locally grown produce and help create additional local markets for agriculture by financially supporting farmers' markets and agro-tourism programs.	AB-15.	Work with the County, City of Auburn and proposed new development along urban edges to create permanent buffers or separators between urban and agricultural land uses.
AB-2.	Work with farmers in the foothills to protect agricultural lands outside of designated development areas by promoting the Williamson Act and use of conservation easements.	AB-16.	Maintain community separators north and south of Auburn through selected acquisitions and/or conservation easements.
AB-3.	Identify a location for a regional center recognizing and celebrating the agricultural tradition of Placer County (not necessarily in this study area).	AB-17.	Work with property owners to reduce flood potential by increasing watershed retention in the Auburn Ravine and Coon Creek watersheds.
AB-4.	Protect high quality riparian habitat through conservation easements.	AB-18.	Protect high fire hazard areas from development through the project planning process.
AB-5.	Work with property owners and the Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek CRMP to restore habitat for trout, salmon, steelhead and amphibians in Auburn Ravine and Coon Creek.	AB-19.	Work in partnership with CDF and local CRMP groups to reduce wildland fire risks throughout the rural residential area.
AB-6.	Protect expansive areas of blue oak and interior live oak woodland habitat along the Bear River.	AB-20.	Acquire fee title or conservation easements on high fire hazard areas with multiple open space values.
AB-7.	Provide incentives and information for property owners to enhance fragmented and degraded oak woodlands and riparian throughout the area.	American River Canyon	
AB-8.	Work with property owners and the Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek CRMP to improve the connectivity and quality of foothill stream zone vegetation for wildlife habitat and water quality.	AR-1.	Coordinate with the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) to preserve and manage for wildlife large expanses of Chamise chaparral, black oak, and other unique vegetation communities.
AB-9.	Work with willing sellers to identify portions of Baltimore Ravine to develop as a recreational resource and biological resource conservation area.	AR-2.	Coordinate with the ASRA to protect and manage aquatic and riparian habitat for special status amphibians. Facilitate acquisition of private lands if necessary.
AB-10.	Support the Placer Nature Center and interpretive trails to educate the public about blue oak woodlands and other foothill habitats.	AR-3.	Work with local, state and federal agencies to protect wildlife corridors in the region that provide connectivity to adjacent areas.

AR-4.	Help facilitate land transfers from private to public lands in areas where the goals of Placer Legacy Program are met.		Sierra Nevada to protect sustainable forest resources outside of designated development areas.
AR-5.	Support efforts to rehabilitate disturbed areas in the American River Canyon, including the dam construction site if a firm decision is made to abandon the project.	FH-4.	Create more land use flexibility in timberland preservation zone (TPZ) regulations.
AR-6.	Work with local, state and federal agencies to protect petroglyphs and other native American cultural and archeological resources.	FH-5.	Protect expansive areas of old growth black oak woodland, through conservation easements and agency land trades.
AR-7.	Provide discretionary funds to protect historical and cultural resources, such as bridge abutments, abandoned gold mining sites and Native American sites.	FH-6.	Protect, through conservation easements and agency land trades, important remaining areas of wetlands, mountain meadow and riparian areas as habitat for special status amphibians.
AR-8.	Work with the ASRA to preserve the scenic transportation corridors and ridgelines that contribute to the quality and value of the entire region.	FH-7.	Provide incentives for property owners to enhance stream zone vegetation for wildlife habitat and water quality.
AR-9.	Preserve canyon views from Interstate 80, through acquisition if necessary.	FH-8.	Work with local, state and federal agencies to protect important wildlife corridors and migration routes.
AR-10.	Protect No Hands Bridge as an important cultural, scenic, and recreational resource.	FH-9.	Work with the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service on appropriate land transfers that further the conservation objectives of Placer Legacy and are responsive to local community concerns.
AR-11.	Work with the ASRA to improve access to and connections within a county-wide trail system, including the Western States Trail, the Stevens' Trail, Stage Coach Trail, and other trails throughout the area.	FH-10.	Work with the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and Bureau of Reclamation to improve access to an interconnected county-wide system of trails and parks.
AR-12.	Provide support and assistance to the ASRA's CanyonKeepers docent program to educate the public about the American River's rich natural and cultural history.	FH-11.	Identify, develop and improve appropriate river access points and other important trailheads.
AR-13.	Work with the ASRA to improve access to rafting and kayaking put-in areas.	FH-12.	Designate and protect scenic transportation corridors along Foresthill Road, Colfax-Iowa Hill Road, and Mosquito Ridge Road.
AR-14.	Work with the ASRA to re-establish recreational opportunities downstream of the confluence near the dam construction site if the original river course is restored.	FH-13.	Provide discretionary funds to protect historical and cultural resources in Foresthill, Michigan Bluff, and other areas.
AR-15.	Reduce the potential for wildland fires by working with CDF and the ASRA to establish buffers and manage fuel loads.	FH-14.	Preserve scenic transportation corridors and ridgelines that contribute to the quality and value of the region.
Foresthill		FH-15.	Create buffers and separators between large timber operations and rural residential use.
FH-1.	Promote and encourage sustainable forestry practices that strengthen small timber companies.	FH-16.	Reduce the potential for wildland fires by working with other agencies to establish buffers and manage fuel loads.
FH-2.	Work with timber interests in the western county to create additional outside markets for Placer County products.	Lower Sierra	
FH-3.	Work with timber interests in the foothills and	LS-1.	Promote and encourage sustainable forestry practices that strengthen small timber companies.
		LS-2.	Work with timber interests in the western

	county to create additional outside markets for Placer County products.	WS-3.	Work with timber interests in the foothills and Sierra Nevada to protect sustainable forest resources outside of designated development areas.
LS-3.	Work with timber interests in the foothills and Sierra Nevada to protect sustainable forest resources outside of designated development areas.	WS-4.	Identify and protect areas of old growth conifers and black oak.
LS-4.	Identify and protect areas of old growth Black Oak woodland.	WS-5.	Protect important remaining areas of wetlands, wet meadows, mountain meadow and riparian habitat.
LS-5.	Protect important remaining areas of wetlands, mountain meadow and riparian habitat.	WS-6.	Work with local, state and federal agencies to protect wildlife corridors that provide connectivity to adjacent areas.
LS-6.	Improve connectivity and quality of stream zone vegetation for wildlife habitat and water quality.	WS-7.	Work with the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service on appropriate land transfers that further the conservation objectives of Placer Legacy.
LS-7.	Work with local, state and federal agencies to protect wildlife corridors in the region that provide connectivity to adjacent areas.	WS-8.	Work with the BLM, USFS and BOR to improve access to an interconnected county-wide system of trails and parks throughout all of Placer County.
LS-8.	Work with the Bureau of Land Management on appropriate land transfers that further the conservation objectives of the Program.	WS-9.	Provide trailheads and acquire trail easements through private land to connect existing public land trail networks.
LS-9.	Work with the BLM, USFS and BOR to improve access to an interconnected county-wide system of trails and parks throughout all of Placer County.	WS-10.	Identify, develop and improve appropriate river access points and other important trailheads.
LS-10.	Work with the BLM to establish a permanent trailhead for the Stevens' Trail near Colfax.	WS-11.	Work with landowners to ensure that private ski resorts and other recreation facilities are managed in an environmentally sound manner.
LS-11.	Provide additional improvements to Placer County's Bear River campground facilities.	WS-12.	Provide discretionary funds to protect cultural resources and historic structures and sites.
LS-12.	Identify, develop, and improve appropriate river access points and other important trailheads.	WS-13.	Identify and protect sections of the historic Lincoln Highway through easements and/or landowner agreements.
LS-13.	Protect historic structures in the towns of Gold Run, Dutch Flat and Alta and in the City of Colfax.	WS-14.	Identify and protect remaining sections of the Emigrant Trail through easements and/or landowner agreements.
LS-14.	Protect scenic resources on the I-80 corridor between Clipper Gap and Crystal Springs.	WS-15.	Protect scenic resources on the I-80 corridor.
LS-15.	Preserve scenic transportation corridors and ridgelines that contribute to the quality and value of the region.	WS-16.	Protect scenic vistas and points at Emigrant Gap, the Yuba Gap, Royal Gorge and Shirley Canyon .
LS-16.	Reduce the potential for wild land fires by working with other agencies to establish buffers and manage fuel loads.	WS-17.	Protect scenic corridors along Old Highway 40, Soda Springs Road.
West Slope Sierra		WS-18.	Preserve the wild and scenic river and roadless area along the upper portion of the North Fork of the American river.
WS-1.	Promote and encourage sustainable forestry practices that strengthen small timber companies.	WS-19.	Reduce the potential for wildland fires by working with other agencies to establish
WS-2.	Work with timber interests in the county to create additional outside markets for Placer County products.		

- buffers and manage fuel loads.
- WS-20. Reduce risks to individuals and property in areas prone to avalanche.

East Slope Sierra

- ES-1. Promote and encourage sustainable forestry practices that strengthen small timber companies.
- ES-2. Promote sales of locally grown produce and agricultural products by supporting farmers markets.
- ES-3. Coordinate with the Forest Service to take advantage of opportunities for land swaps that achieve Placer Legacy goals.
- ES-4. Protect and restore, through conservation easements and/or interagency coordination, habitat for endangered and threatened species including Lahontan cutthroat trout and the Mountain yellow-legged frog.
- ES-5. Protect important remaining areas of wetlands, mountain meadow, wet meadow and riparian habitat through conservation easements and/or interagency coordination.
- ES-6. Unless otherwise protected by other means, protect wet meadow areas in the Martis Valley and Olympic Valley from incompatible adjacent development through the use of conservation easements and fee title acquisition.
- ES-7. Protect river and stream corridors, specifically the Truckee River, Martis Creek, Coldstream Creek and Pole Creek from incompatible development.
- ES-8. Work with local, state and federal agencies to protect wildlife corridors between major habitat areas.
- ES-9. Develop trailheads and trail connections that improve public access to an interconnected county- and region-wide system of trails and parks.
- ES-10. Create nature centers and interpretive trails to educate the public about the natural history of the region.
- ES-11. Work with landowners to insure that private recreation facilities are managed in an environmentally responsible manner.
- ES-12. Work with local, state and federal agencies to protect petroglyphs and other native American cultural and archeological resources.

- ES-13. Provide discretionary funds to protect historical buildings and old Tahoe landmarks.
- ES-14. Identify and preserve scenic transportation corridors and ridgelines that contribute to the quality and value of the region.
- ES-15. Enhance watershed retention and diminish the effects of flooding where possible.
- ES-16. Reduce the potential for wildland fires by working with other agencies to establish buffers and reduce fuel loads.
- ES-17. Reduce risks to individuals and private property in areas prone to avalanche.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Board of Directors

The County of Placer currently manages the Placer Legacy Program. Decision-making responsibility rests with the Placer County Board of Supervisors, which will serve as the program's Board of Directors. County staff will continue to provide technical, administrative and professional assistance to the Board through an Open Space Advisory Commission (see below).

Open Space Advisory Commission

An Open Space Advisory Commission will provide the first tier of decision-making for the Board of Directors. The Commission is modeled after other similar resource-oriented commissions in County government (e.g., the Parks and Agricultural Commissions). The Commission will conduct public hearings and workshops on matters related to the implementation of the program including:

1. Allocation of funds for land acquisition activities and land management programs;
2. Allocation of funds for Placer Legacy programs;
3. Criteria for establishing program priorities;
4. Trend monitoring;
5. General direction to staff on matters related to program implementation

The Commission will be comprised of 9 members appointed by the Board of Supervisors, representing a broad range of interests, including environmental, land development, and agriculture.

Biological Stakeholder Working Group

A Biological Stakeholder Working Group will be formed to represent a broad range of stakeholder interests during the preparation of the HCP/NCCP. Stakeholder representation will include the following: environmental organizations, developers and landowners, agricultural and timber interests, agency staff, educators and representatives from the Scientific Review Team (see below).

Scientific Review Team

The County will receive input from a Placer Legacy Scientific Review Team. Membership will include local biologists familiar with the specific habitats and species of Placer County, as well as experts in the fields of conservation biology, community ecology and geography. This newly formed Scientific Review Team will ensure the scientific integrity of the Placer County HCP/ NCCP and the biological objectives of the Program by recommending a set of principles for reserve design, species conservation and adaptive management upon which the plan can be based.

REGULATORY OBJECTIVES

An important component of the Placer Legacy Program is the conservation and protection of Placer County's plant and animal diversity, including sensitive species. Numerous General Plan and Community Plan policies have been adopted for the same purpose.

Biological resources are regulated by state and federal resource agencies, i.e., the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). The Placer Legacy Program will develop a programmatic approach to natural resource regulation, intended to replace much of the project-by-

project permitting that currently occurs through these agencies.

Placer Legacy will serve as the framework for the development and adoption of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) pursuant to Section 10(a) of the Federal Endangered Species Act and a Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) pursuant to Chapter 10, Division 3 of the California Fish and Game Code (2800 et. seq.). Programmatic wetland permitting (pursuant to Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act) would be integrated into either or both of the above planning efforts. These plans are intended to address the specific regulatory requirements associated with impacts to endangered species and wetlands. The plans are to meet these requirements in a manner that provides for the regional or area-wide protection and perpetuation of natural wildlife diversity, while allowing compatible and appropriate development and growth. The Placer Legacy Program approach to HCP/NCCP permitting is unique in that the regulatory requirements are to be met as a part of a larger open space conservation effort. Because the Placer Legacy Program assigns a high priority to the conservation of biological resources, the regulatory components are simply a subset of a larger effort. This will allow for a higher conservation standard than most programs, which are only intended to address impacts to these resources. If the program is successful, it is anticipated that the County can avoid species becoming threatened or endangered, thus avoiding new regulations and at the same conserving sensitive biological resources.

Guidelines for Development of an HCP/NCCP

In order to ensure that all interests are addressed, it is necessary to establish a set of guidelines to measure the success of a

regulatory program. Based on the experience of other jurisdictions, it is proposed that the following guidelines be followed during the development and implementation of the Placer Legacy HCP/NCCP:

1. The plan should be based on the best available science.

Best available science means that the Program will:

- be based on principles of conservation biology, community ecology, landscape ecology, individual species' ecology and other scientific knowledge and thought;
- be based on thorough surveys of all species of federal, state and local concern on lands dedicated to conservation or mitigation and lands subject to take activity;
- be reviewed by well-qualified, independent scientists;
- identify and designate biologically sensitive habitat areas for preservation;
- determine the extent of impacts to species from take activity;
- require monitoring of target species on developed, mitigation and other preserved lands for the lifetime of the plan; and
- seek to contribute to the recovery, not just the maintenance, of species covered by the plan.

2. The plan should be created in an open and transparent manner with input from all concerned citizens.

An open and transparent manner means that the Program will:

- provide for thorough public review and comment;
- include a citizen working group that will review the plan at every stage of

- development; and
- require that negotiations with applicable agencies be conducted in an open manner.

3. The plan should contain elements that assure that the goals of the plan are actually met.

Required elements that will help meet the goals of the plan include:

- monitoring and review of plan objectives and milestones at defined intervals to assure that they are being met, including the identification of a process to suspend, modify, or revoke permits if there is not sufficient compliance with the agreed upon objectives;
- adequate funding sources identified up front for habitat preservation and species recovery goals, based on realistic estimates of future land value for the life of the permits;
- adequate funding for monitoring to determine that plan goals are actually being met;
- adaptive management and periodic review, with sufficient funding to support changes in take activity and mitigation required to meet the plan's goals;
- acquisition of required mitigation lands before development proceeds; and
- performance standards for contributing to species recovery.

PROGRAM COSTS

In Spring 2000 an economic and fiscal impact assessment was prepared to estimate the cost of the non-regulatory components of the Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program. The costs associated with the regulatory portion of the program (for

biological resources) will be determined after permit negotiations have been completed and implementation agreements have been drafted.

The complete cost assessment is located in Placer Legacy Background Report. To estimate Program costs, a series of scenarios based on increasing levels of land management (in terms of number of acres and level of stewardship activity) was analyzed, resulting in three sets of estimates—baseline, enhanced and high. In addition to land management activities (e.g., acquisition of conservation easements or fee title to property), the analysis included programs that will be developed and managed by Placer Legacy (e.g., agricultural marketing or the development of a scenic highways/corridors plan). For the program components, cost estimates for baseline, enhanced and high scenarios reflect potential levels of staff and funding commitment.

The cost estimates presented were developed in support of the planning effort and served as the basis for developing a funding proposal for the Placer Legacy Program. Some of the preliminary estimates will be refined based on review, comment and, over time, experience. In any case, the estimates will remain just that: estimates. They are approximations for planning purposes, based on the best information available.

Table 4 depicts the anticipated one-time costs for obtaining public interest in property, and estimated start-up and development costs for the Program. The ongoing costs are associated with operations, maintenance and monitoring, and various short- and long-term program activities.

After all lands are obtained and under management, annual costs for land management and program activities would peak at about \$1.0 million per year under the

baseline scenario, \$2.4 million per year under the enhanced scenario, and \$3.5 million per year under the high scenario. HCP/NCCP implementation and monitoring costs will require additional funding. The funds for HCP/NCCP costs will come from the parties receiving the benefits of the programmatic permits.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

As described above, the Placer Legacy Program will require millions of dollars to implement and manage over time. A wide range of funding options is available to cover these costs. For the scope and scale of this

effort, it will be necessary to have a reliable, annual funding source. Options include a

sales tax increase, property tax increase and/or general fund contributions.

Placer Legacy funding and support may also come from a variety of other revenue sources, including one or more of the following:

- Open space conversion fees
- Development exactions
- Park fee increase for passive parks
- State and federal funding (e.g., Land and Water Conservation Fund, California Farmland Conservancy Program, Propositions 12 and 13)
- Private foundation grants
- Donations (land and funding)

Table 4. Total Costs to Implement Placer Legacy for Three Scenarios (costs in 2000 dollars)

COST COMPONENT		Baseline Effort	Enhanced Effort	High Effort
<u>Land Management Activities</u>				
X	Obtaining Public Interest	\$19,770,000	\$72,746,000	\$155,938,000
X	Planning, Start-Up, and Development	4,908,000	18,659,000	25,539,000
	On-going Operating and Monitoring	1,005,000	2,423,000	3,527,000
<u>Program Activities</u>				
X	One-year Effort	\$5,000	\$49,000	\$64,000
X	Two-year Effort	--	40,000	53,000
X	Three year Effort	--	5,000	25,000
X	Preparation of HCP/NCCP	543,000	886,000	1,279,000
	On-going Costs	28,000	145,000	225,000
Summary of One-time Costs over 30 Years		\$25,226,000	\$92,385,000	\$182,898,000
Summary of On-going Annual Costs Year 30 and Beyond		\$1,033,000	\$2,568,000	\$3,752,000
X = one-time and capital cost.				
SOURCE: Hausrath Economics Group, Thomas Reid Associates, and the Placer County Planning Department.				

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PROTECTING OPEN SPACE

Significant research has been conducted on the economic benefits associated with open space protection/conservation programs. Overall, such programs are perceived beneficially by the community and typically contribute positively to an area's economy.

Preserving open space and habitat in an integrated regional system enhances the quality of life for residents and businesses by safeguarding biological diversity, environmental quality, rural and scenic character, and recreational and educational assets.

Local governments and property owners benefit from increased property values and lower infrastructure and service costs associated with communities that curb sprawl and protect open space.

The local economy benefits from a regulatory compliance program that streamlines the development process. In addition, public and private commitment to providing a superior quality of life enables businesses to attract and retain high quality workers. Protecting agriculture and scenic resources enhances visitors' experiences and increases tourist revenues.

Owners of agricultural land receive economic compensation, and the agricultural economy is protected when speculative pressures on agricultural land are reduced.

Preserving open space and habitat also protects the integrity of ecosystem services, such as water and air filtration, soil creation and other natural processes, upon which all economic activity depends.



"We shall never achieve harmony with land, any more than we shall achieve absolute justice or liberty for people. In these higher aspirations the important thing is not to achieve, but to strive."

-- Aldo Leopold

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